



## State of Idaho

# DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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C. L. "BUTCH" OTTER  
Governor

DAVID R. TUTHILL, JR.  
Interim Director

April 4, 2007

W. KENT FLETCHER  
FLETCHER LAW OFFICE  
1200 OVERLAND AVENUE  
P.O. BOX 248  
BURLEY, ID 83318-0248

### Re: Gauge – Big Lost River

Mr. Fletcher:

This letter responds to your correspondence of March 9, 2007 to the Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources (Department), in which you, on behalf of the Big Lost River Irrigation District (BLRID) Board of Directors (Board), protest the relocation of a gauging station in Water District No. 34. Your letter was forwarded to me for reply since I am familiar with the issue and the two gauging locations in question. In your letter, you state that the Board believes the current location of the Leslie gauge provides a more accurate indication of flow than the proposed location. Furthermore, you ask for the Department's position on the matter.

I have reviewed this issue with other staff and the Director. The Department supports relocating the gage as proposed at the March 5, 2007 WD34 Annual Meeting. The following points are relevant to the question and form the basis for the Department's position:

1. The gage in question was installed in 2006 on the Big Lost River at the US Highway 93 Bridge located in the SE1/4NE1/4SE1/4, Section 14, Township 6 North, Range 25 East.
2. Rule 25 of the Water Distribution Rules for Water District No. 34 (IDAPA 37.03.12.25.01) describes seven river reaches to be used for natural flow accounting. The "Leslie Reach" is described as:

*"2-B gage to the Leslie Gage, located in the NW1/4SW1/4SE1/4,  
Section 4, Township 5 North, Range 26 East, B.M."*

3. The gage location described in the rules is at the Houston Road Bridge near the Leslie Butte. This gauging station is approximately 2 ¼ miles upstream of the Highway 93 Bridge.
4. Three diversions exist between the two gage locations; the Beck and Evan, the Blaine, and the Three-in-one. The water distribution rules place these three diversions in the Leslie to Moore reach. Locating one gage at the Highway 93 location would place these

three diversions in the Leslie reach, thereby complicating the accounting procedure for reach gains and losses, and resulting in inconsistencies between accounting procedures and the distribution rules.

5. IDWR has maintained a simple stage-discharge rating at the Leslie gage at Houston Road and has experienced some difficulty over the years maintaining the rating accurately due to staff resources, adequate equipment, and some physical limitations of the site. IDWR has encouraged the water district over the years to budget for continuous maintenance of a gauging station and rating curve at the site.
6. Idaho Power has been contracted to maintain the Highway 93 Bridge gage. If this gage is relocated to the Houston Road site, Idaho Power will maintain the gage at the new location and discontinue the Highway 93 location. Idaho Power utilizes an Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) to measure stream flows when developing and maintaining the rating curves. Although the Houston Road gauging site is problematic for stream flow measurements using standard current meter and bridge suspension equipment, accurate measurements can be made using the ADCP equipment. Therefore, the problems encountered with developing and maintaining an accurate rating at the Houston Road site will no longer be an issue.

Locating the gage near the Houston Road crossing, as required by the distribution rules, will allow the flow of the Big Lost River at that location to be measured and recorded continuously. The Department believes the contract with Idaho Power will ensure the gage is maintained and properly rated in accordance with the rules, and will improve the delivery and accounting of water in Water District No. 34.

I trust this information answers your questions regarding IDWR's position on the location of the Leslie gage. If the BLRID Board of Directors continues to feel an additional gage at the Blaine Diversion (Highway 93 bridge) is necessary, I encourage them to work with Water District No. 34 to fund a gage at that location.

Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions on this matter.

Sincerely,



Tim Luke  
Manager, Water Distribution Section

cc: IDWR Eastern Region  
Bob Schafer, WD34 Watermaster – PO Box 53 Mackay, ID 83251  
Big Lost River Irrigation District, 101 S Main Ave Mackay, ID 83251

Tim - Plz.  
advise  
Dave

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March 9, 2007

RECEIVED

MAR 12 2007

DEPARTMENT OF  
WATER RESOURCES

Dave Tuthill, Director   
Idaho Department of Water Resources  
P.O. Box 83720  
Boise, Idaho 83720-0098

RE: Gauge - Big Lost River

Dear Mr. Tuthill:

The Board of Directors of the Big Lost River Irrigation District asked that I write you concerning a gauge located on the Big Lost River. Some time in the recent past, the Department installed a gauge near the Blaine Diversion of the Big Lost River. This year at the annual meeting of the Water District, a vote was taken to move the gauge upstream near the Leslie Bridge.

The Directors believe that the Blaine Diversion gauge provides a more accurate reading of flows. By moving the gauge upstream, the Directors are concerned that river losses will not be accurately measured.

Doesn't the Department have a position on the most accurate location for a gauge in this reach of the river? Even if the waterusers vote to locate the gauge in a particular area, the Directors believe that the Department should be concerned with the location that would provide the most accurate reading.

The Directors asked that I write you and protest the relocation of the gauge and further request that the gauge remain at the Blaine Diversion. After you have had a chance to review this matter, please let me know your position.

Sincerely,

FLETCHER LAW OFFICE

  
Kent Fletcher

KF/brd

pc: Big Lost River Irrigation District